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is a compilation; but to say that it is not trustworthy is to use words without knowledge. Dr. Egli is scrupulously faithful in his citations and interpretations, and it may be affirmed that the most patient search through the 1035 pages of the *Nomina Geographica* will fail to bring to light any error, implying ignorance or presumption on the part of the author. Not even Canon Taylor can say as much for the 390 pages of *Names and Their Histories*.

The Hill-Caves of Yucatan. A Search for Evidence of Man's Antiquity in the Caverns of Central America. Being an Account of the Corwith Expedition of the Department of Archæology and Palæontology of the University of Pennsylvania. By Henry C. Mercer, Curator of the Museum of American and Prehistoric Archæology at the University of Pennsylvania, in charge of the Expedition. With Seventy-Four Illustrations. 8vo. Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Company, 1896.

Mr. Mercer's thoughts had been occupied since the year 1890 with the idea of searching in the caves of Yucatan or Chiapas for the beds of charcoal and ashes associated with human relics and denoting human occupancy, when, at the end of 1894, Mr. J. W. Corwith, of Chicago, made an offer to the University of Pennsylvania to equip an expedition. Even then, with Yucatan in his mind, Mr. Mercer seems to have been undecided which way to turn; whether to Brazil, or to Peru or to Mexico. Prof. Heilprin came to the rescue with a report of large, dry caves in a small range of hills in Central Yucatan. In these there were signs of human habitation and they might be expected to furnish an answer to the question: How long had man lived in Yucatan?

The hills in question are in the western part of the peninsula, southwest and south of Merida, and they are overgrown with forest. The caves open into the ground like wells. They form, says Mr. Mercer,

a very striking class of underground chambers from fifty to three hundred and fifty feet in diameter and from fifteen to seventy feet high, more or less brightly lit by round openings in the ceiling ten, twenty and fifty feet in diameter. Through these skylights fragments of the original crust had fallen, forming piles of loose stones on the cave floor. When the downfallen accumulations set sufficiently against one side of the orifice, it was easy to walk down their slope, but, as a general rule, a chasm of some feet had to be bridged over in reaching them, either by descending on a rope or clambering down the root of the alamo-tree, which flourished on the brink of most of the skylights, often sending its tendrils to the cave floor. Where the rock pile was high enough, banana-trees and tropical evergreens growing upon it swept the brink of the chasm with their boughs, making strange rattlings when the wind blew. Some-

times the subterranean groves lay far beneath the surface in rotundas inaccessible from above. Then they were first seen after a long clamber underground, like gardens beneath the vaultings of sombre passages. Doves built their nests in high ledges by the skylights, and animals found refuge under the rock heaps, where Indians had built blinds of loose stones to stalk them (*p.* 22).

The work of the expedition occupied sixty days and the area examined was about one hundred miles in length by ten in breadth. Twenty-nine caves were visited and ten of these were excavated. Thirteen had archæological significance. Six yielded valuable, and three, Sabaka, Oxkintok and Loltun, decisive results. The layer of human refuse was substantially the same in all the caves, which had not been used as dwellings nor as burial-places, but only as halting-spots.

Human bones in the rubbish indicated that cannibalism had been practised. The explorers found neither copper nor gold nor silver, no jade, no gums, no preserved grains, no cloth, no weaving apparatus, no pipe, no tobacco, and they agreed upon these conclusions:

First. That no earlier inhabitant had preceded the builders of the ruined cities of Yucatan.

Second. That the people revealed in the caves had reached the country in geologically recent times.

Third. That these people, substantially the ancestors of the Maya Indians, had not developed their culture in Yucatan, but had brought it with them from somewhere else.

It is recognized that these conclusions may be upset by future revelations in some cave or caves not visited by this party, but meanwhile they stand as the outcome of a most intelligent and carefully-conducted exploration.

Mr. Mercer did not confine his observations to caves and human rubbish. His remarks on the country and the scenery, the living Mayas and their ways, have more than a passing value.

Some misprints, such as *siebo-trees* and *terra caliente*, several times repeated, should not have been allowed to pass.

The text is elucidated by more than seventy illustrations from photographs and drawings.

Lakes of North America. A Reading Lesson for Students of Geography and Geology. By Israel C. Russell, Professor of Geology, University of Michigan. 8vo. Boston, U. S. A., and London. Published by Ginn & Company, 1895.

In this volume Prof. Russell has brought together the results of his studies and observations during thirteen years' geological work for the National Government, supplemented by information drawn